

REMARKS / ARGUMENTS

The action by the Examiner in this application, together with the references cited by him, have been given careful consideration. Following such consideration, the claims have been amended to define more clearly the patentable invention Applicant believes is disclosed herein. It is respectfully requested that the Examiner reconsider the claims in their present form, together with the following comments, and allow the application.

As the Examiner well knows, the present invention relates to a movable track system having a plurality of movable racks that travel freely back and forth along a predetermined path. As set forth in the claims, each of the movable racks includes "travel amount detection means" (an encoder in one embodiment) for detecting the *amount of travel* of "travel support devices" (driven wheels in one embodiment) that support the racks. The present invention also includes "control means" operable to perform a "rack attitude correcting control" when a deviation occurs in the travel amounts of the driven travel support devices, as detected by the travel amount detection means. In this respect, the rotation drive means are controlled to eliminate deviation between the predicted values and the detected values.

It is respectfully submitted that none of the cited references, alone or together, teaches, suggests or shows a movable rack system as set forth in the claims.

Claims 1-24 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. Section 112, second paragraph. In response thereto, claim 1 has been amended to refer to "travel amount detection means." Claims 7 and 14 have been amended to refer to "widthwise shift detection means." It is believed that the foregoing amendments overcome the Section 112 rejection.

The claims stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. Section 102 as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,842,585 to Hollander, and under 35 U.S.C. Section 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 4,039,040 to Spears et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,424,875 to Yoshida.

The '585 patent to Hollander discloses a shelf arrangement having a detection means that detects whether or not a deviation from a "detection line" exists. It is respectfully submitted that the detection means in the '585 reference to Hollander do not detect the *amount of travel* of the movable rack. In this respect, it is respectfully submitted that the present invention is not anticipated by the '585 patent to Hollander. Moreover, the '585 reference does not teach,

suggest or show control means operable to perform a rack attitude correction by using predicted values of the travel amounts of the "driven travel support means," when a deviation occurs in the travel amounts of the driven travel support devices as detected by the travel amount detection means.

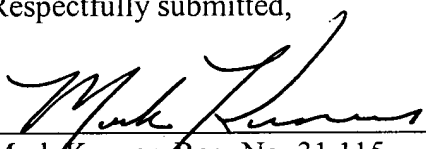
With respect to the '875 patent to Yoshida, it is respectfully submitted that the cited reference discloses only a position deviation sensor for detecting a deviation from a detection line. It does not teach, suggest or show means for detecting the *amount of travel* of the driven travel support devices. For the reasons set forth above, it is respectfully submitted that the '875 patent to Yoshida does not teach, suggest or show the claimed invention.

In summary, it is respectfully submitted that none of the cited references, alone or together, teaches, suggests or shows "detection means" for detecting the *amount of travel* or the "control means performing a movable rack attitude correcting control by using predicted values of the travel amounts of the driven travel support devices, when a deviation occurs in the travel amounts of the driven travel support devices respectively detected by the travel amount detection means."

Favorable action is therefore respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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I hereby certify that this correspondence (along with any paper referenced as being attached or enclosed) is being deposited on the below date with the United States Postal Service with sufficient postage as first class mail in an envelope addressed to MAIL STOP NON-FEE AMENDMENT, Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450.

Date: December 5, 2003


Christine Goellner